




Business Insider is prolific with the number of reading lists they produce every year. What books grace Jamie Dimon's nightstand? Which titles motivate Warren Buffett? Granted, there are respectable fiction and non-fiction selections among their lists; several have captured my attention. Business Insider fails miserably when it comes to the topic of investing. Blind buy-and-hold is the overarching theme so candidly, I ignore their choices. It's not that I haven't read them. I have. With close to 30 years of financial services industry experience and employed 14 of them by a large organization that minimized the impact of the financial crisis on client portfolios, I cannot in good faith endorse most of their investing and finance selections. I have witnessed the anguish firsthand of those who needed to postpone retirement indefinitely, failed to meet goals, died before they broke even. No, I've studied their investing book choices that ignore the devastating impact of a human life as it collides with the time it takes to break even or get ahead financially. So, no thanks. My choices reflect where my focus lies for the next twelve months. What I seek to learn.

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The New Childhood: Raising Kids to Thrive in a Connected World by Jordan Shapiro. Dr. Shapiro is a friend, mentor and most important ? an inspiration. I'm humbled to receive a personal acknowledgement in this book. Jordan's research busts barriers when it comes to children and their use of technology and social media. As a thought leader in education, Jordan provides a glimpse into the curriculums and classrooms of the future. Jordan shines when it comes to his ideas about the education system and how it must be transformed for children to learn how to flourish as productive, effective adults in a connected world. He provides refreshing and, in some instances, radical alternatives to the archaic, grade-based, testing-intense structure which primarily rewards youth for memorization when critical thinking skills are urgently required. From revamped classroom setups to educational curriculum, down to the educators themselves, Jordan urges an open exchange of knowledge and skills with educators as guides who facilitate the flow of participatory engagement and provide an intellectual sandbox for children to develop skill sets which allow them to prosper within a digitally connected future. **Keeping At It: The Quest for Sound Money and Good Government** by Paul Volcker. Yes, former Fed Chair Paul Volcker is known for breaking the back of debilitating inflation but there is so much more to him and his accomplishments. The book is surprising simple to read and not written in complicated ?Fed Speak,? we've become accustomed to out of central bank leaders. There are memorable inside stories, chronicled challenges of a 1970's American economy in turmoil and how a stoic among Fed Chairs battled the monetary and even fiscal demons of the times. **The Myth of Capitalism: Monopolies and the Death of Competition** by Jonathan Tepper. Not popular with the hedge fund and C-Suite crowd, Jonathan Tepper outlines how capitalism as we know it is in danger and in many cases ? dead. The U.S. economy has morphed from an open, competitive market place to an economy dominated by a few very powerful companies. He analyzes the impact of this seminal change on business and consumer rights going forward. Monopolistic behavior has irreparably accelerated wealth inequality, suppressed wage growth and dramatically reduced the number of business startups. Jonathan's book is impressively thorough and researched. When pondering ?what is structurally broken in the American economy?? this tome provides many of the answers. The truths shared will sit uncomfortable with you. However, after reading you'll understand a cancerous thread that has now corralled the once noble and enlightened vision of American capitalism. **The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas are**

Setting Up a Generation for Failure by Greg Lukianoff & Jonathan Haidt. A social psychologist and an attorney team up to research and share insights into the dangerous coddling of students by parents and educators. Helicopter parenting and the ideology now prevalent on college campuses are creating a generation of adults who cannot accept or understand failure or disappointment. This generation is less tolerant of opposing views which will impact how future decision makers create policy and handle obstacles. The authors contend that children are prohibited from the development of resilience. The 'culture of safetyism' affects all of us as citizens. Lukianoff and Haidt illustrate events that led us to public discourse along with steps for parents and educators to aid children to avoid tribalism, combat confirmation bias and prepare for adversity. **The Laws of Human Nature** by Dr. Robert Greene. My personal 'go-to' guide to improvement for 2019. The author covers how to build awareness and tackle personal faults when dealing with others. To be discouraged by faults in others is to first be aware of similar weaknesses in ourselves. Robert Greene's style coupled with historical examples is diluted for the masses when compared to his past writings. However, the author's purpose is to break down the laws of human nature in a manner that's easily grasped, thus impactful. Practical steps to allay anger, build empathy and how to healthfully admit and deal with personal shortcomings helps us understand the same in other people. Human nature and interaction are complex. Dr. Greene's book is realistic and works to allay the emotional friction that dwells within and prevents us from connecting with other humans. Books have been an enduring primary indulgence. Written words remain one of life's greatest gifts. I hope you enjoy the top 5 on my list for 2019.